

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

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USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 1583

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, PE, EC
SUBJECT: ECUADOREAN ACCESS TO THE AMAZON

REF: (A) QUITO 1040, (B) 77 LIMA 8627, (C) 77 LIMA 10178 (NOTAL),
(D) QUITO 1067

1. WE AGREE THAT THE PERUVIAN FOREIGN MINISTER IN PARTICULAR
IS NOT BEING COMPLETELY FORTHCOMING WITH US ON THE BACKGROUND TO
THE CURRENT FLAP. BUT HE DID MAKE IT REASONABLE CLEAR TO AMB
SHLAUDEMANN THREE MONTHS AGO THAT THE SCHEME FOR AN EXCHANGE
OF NOTES WAS DEAD (REF C). AS FAR AS WE NOW CAN DETERMINE, THE
SUBSTANTIVE PRIVATE CONTACTS ON THIS ISSUE EFFECTIVELY CEASED
SOME TIME NOT LONG AFTER DE LA PUENTE AND AYALA TALKED IN NEW YORK
DURING THE UNGA. WE CAN UNDERSTAND THAT THE ECUADOREANS WOULD FEEL
THEMSELVES MISLED BUT DOUBT THAT DE LA PUENTE HAD ANY CHOICE IN
THE MATTER. IN OUR JUDGMENT THE CONCEPT OF CONTIGUOUS
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SOVEREIGN ECUADOREAN ACCESS TO THE MARANON REMAINS INCONCEIVABLE
TO THE PERUVIAN POWER STRUCTURE (REF B). DE LA PUENTE SIMPLY
GOT MUCH TOO FAR OUT IN FRONT.

2. THUS, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S COMMUNIQUE AND THE PRIVATE
STATEMENTS TO US DO HAVE THE VIRTUE OF RESTATING THE REALITY OF
WHAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE BASIC PERUVIAN POSITION. THAT A

CONSENSUS ON A MORE MODERATE APPROACH TO THE ISSUE HAS BEEN TAKING SHAPE AMONG ECUADOR'S LEADERS IS ENCOURAGING. BUT THE PERUVIANS ARE UNLIKELY TO PERCEIVE THAT FACT OR APPRECIATE ITS SIGNIFICANCE AS LONG AS THE ECUADOREAN BOTTOM LINE IS SOVEREIGN CONTIGUOUS ACCESS TO THE MARANON. EVEN AYALA'S "MINIMUM POSITION" (REF D) OF A SYMBOLIC, NARROW CORRIDOR DRAWN ABOVE THE PONGO DE MANSERICHE (ASSUMING THE ECUADOREAN MILITARY WOULD SUPPORT HIM) WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY BE UNACCEPTABLE TO THE GOP. GOE HOPES FOR A RENEGOTIATION OF THE RIO PROTOCOL BASED ON THE FACT THAT SOME 100 KILOMETERS OF BORDER HAVE YET TO BE DETERMINED (REF A) STILL APPEAR TO US TO BE ILLUSORY. IF SOMETHING ELSE IS MEANT BY "SOME ACCESS" OR "SOME KIND OF ACCESS," THEN THE PROSPECTS FOR EVENTUALLY MEANINGFUL NEGOTIATIONS ARE BETTER THAN THEY CURRENTLY APPEAR.

3. ON THE QUESTION OF A PROSPECTIVE RESORT TO ARMS, WE BELIEVE ECUADOR'S FEAR FOR ITS OIL FIELDS ARE ABOUT IN THE SAME CLASS AS PERU'S SUSPICIONS THAT ECUADOR IS RESPONDING TO AN EVIL CHILEAN DESIGN. RATHER, THE DANGER IS THAT BORDER INCIDENTS WILL CREATE A PSYCHOLOGY IN WHICH THE HOTHEADS IN THE PERUVIAN ARMED FORCES COULD SELL THE IDEA OF A RETALIATORY AIR STRIKE TO TEACH THE NORTHERN NEIGHBOR A LESSON. IT IS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT THE OLMEDO VISIT STRUCK US AS POTENTIALLY USEFUL. THE GOE HAS CAUSE TO VIEW EXCHANGE VISITS OF THIS KIND WITH SKEPTICISM. BUT A FRIENDLY MILITARY VISIT IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE SPEECH AND THE COMMUNIQUE MIGHT WELL HELP COOL DOWN THE PATRIOTIC

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CHEST BEATERS HERE WHO HAVE BEEN HAVING THEIR DAY OF LATE.

4. REGARDING THE OLMEDO VISIT, DAO HAS LEARNED FROM CAPT. ZARAGUEY, SECRETARY TO NAVY MINISTER PARODI, THAT THE VISIT HAS BEEN POSTPONED FOR 15 DAYS IN ORDER TO COINCIDE WITH THE VISIT OF THE ECUADOREAN TRAINING SHIP. DAO PASSED ON OUR VIEW THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL IF VISIT DID TAKE PLACE AS A MEANS TO SMOOTH RELATIONS BETWEEN PERU AND ECUADOR. ZARAGUEY ASSURED US HE WOULD PASS THIS TO MINISTER PARODI, AND WE WILL SEEK OTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO ENCOURAGE THE VISIT AND TO GET THE BORDER ISSUE BACK TO PRIVATE DISCUSSION.

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